

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OC-06 CCO-00 L-03 SS-15 FBO-01 SAJ-01

SY-10 NSC-10 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DRC-01

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P R 120802Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1909

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

S E C R E T MOSCOW 10920

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: ABLD ASEC ACOM UR

SUBJECT: OFFICE BUILDING SECURE AREA

DEPT FOR EUR/EX, OC, SY, FBO

FRANKFURT FOR RSS & RTC

1. FOLLOWING MESSAGE RECEIVED SEPT 11 FROM CG, LENINGRAD:

BEGIN QUOTE

DURING CALL ON LENINGRAD UPDK CHIEF POPOV SEPTEMBER 10 TO SIGN RESIDENCE LEASE AND TO PRESENT MATHEWS AND FING, POPOV TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OCCASION TO HAND OVER LETTER, COPY AND TRANSLATION NEXT POUCH, PROTESTING UNAUTHORIZED ALTERATIONS TO EXTERIOR OF OFFICE BUILDING AND SAID SUCH ALTERATIONS SHOULD BE STOPPED IMMEDIATELY PENDING RECEIPT OF APPROVAL FOR THEM BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES. I TOLD POPOV I WOULD REPORT FOREGOING TO MY SUPERIORS AND HOPED TO BE ABLE TO MAKE A PROMPT RESPONSE.

MR. POPOV SAID THAT WE HAVE BEEN PERMITTED TO CARRY OUT INTERNAL CONSTRUCTION WORK PRIOR TO SIGNATURE OF LEASE AS RESULT OF GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT WHICH WE IN EFFECT HAVE VIOLATED. IF

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CORRECTIVE MEASURES NOT TAKEN PROMPTLY BY U.S. SIDE THERE WILL

BE SERIOUS PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES FOR SOVIET OFFICIALS INVOLVED. MR. POPOV REQUESTED US TO SIGN LEASE FOR OFFICE BUILDING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HE OFFERED TO HAVE WEST WING ELEVATOR PUT INTO OPERATION ON SEPTEMBER 11 AND OTHER DEFICIENCY, WHICH HAS DELAYED OUR SIGNING OF LEASE, IMPROVEMENT OF FUEL STORAGE TANKS OR STANDBY GENERATORS, WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN BY SOVIETS IN ACCORDANCE WITH AGREED PROTOCOL TO LEASE.

COMMENT: THE BRICKING UP OF WINDOWS WITHOUT SOVIET AUTHORIZATION WOULD CLEARLY BE A VIOLATION OF LEASE HAD IT BEEN SIGNED. WE PREVIOUSLY TOLD SOVIETS WE WOULD BE PREPARED SIGN OFFICE BUILDING LEASE AS SOON AS ABOVE IMPERFECTIONS CORRECTED. I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE VERY UNWISE TO SEEK AGREEMENT WITH SOVIETS ON ANY CONSTRUCTION OR ALTERATIONS ON TOP FLOOR. IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER THEY WOULD AGREE TO BRICKING UP OF WINDOWS IN ANY EVENT. MORE SERIOUS, IT WOULD PROVIDE SOVIETS WITH PRETEXT TO QUESTION WHAT WE ARE UP TO. SOVIETS HAVE NOT QUESTIONED OTHER SEABEE WORK ON BUILDING. UP UNTIL NOW LENINGRAD AUTHORITIES HAVE DONE THEIR BEST TO PROVIDE US WITH BUILDING CONSIDERABLY ABOVE SOVIET STANDARDS AND AT A PRIORITY PACE. I SEE NO ALTERNATIVES BUT TO UNBRICK THE WINDOWS AND RESTORE THEM TO THEIR PREVIOUS CONDITION, OF COURSE USING SEABEE LABOR. IN TURN ALL PLANS SHOULD BE ALTERED ACCORDINGLY.

REQUEST URGENT GUIDANCE.

END QUOTE

2. EMBASSY COMMENT: WE BELIEVE FOLLOWING COURSES OF ACTION AVAILABLE:

A. DISCONTINUE BRICKING UP WINDOWS WHICH WILL SERIOUSLY IMPAIR FOURTH FLOOR PROJECT;

B. CONTINUE PROJECT AS PLANNED AND REFUSE TO SIGN LEASE PENDING FAVORABLE NEGOTIATION ON MATTER; AND

C. STOP PROJECT AND REFUSE TO SIGN LEASE.

3. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT WINDOWS BRICKED ARE IN THE REAR OF SECRET

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THE BUILDING AND ARE OUT OF VIEW OF ALL BUT THOSE AMERICANS LIVING THERE AND SOVIET OBSERVATION POINT ESTABLISHED TO REAR OF COMPOUND. (IN JUNE SOVIETS CUT SEVERAL WINDOWS IN WHAT WAS BLIND WALL OF BUILDING.) SY OFFICER BARKMAN, WHO WAS IN MOSCOW ON CONSULTATION WHEN CONGEN MESSAGE ABOVE WAS RECEIVED, BELIEVES THAT CESSATION OF PROJECT WOULD COMPROMISE SECURITY INTEGRITY OF THE FOURTH FLOOR AREA AND ESTABLISH AN UNSATISFACTORY PRECEDENT FOR THE FUTURE.

4. IT IS EMBASSY'S UNDERSTANDING THAT IF BRICKING UP OF WINDOWS
IS HALTED, INSTALLATION OF SENSITIVE EQUIPMENT COULD NOT PROCEED
AND COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY OF CONGEN MAY BE SERIOUSLY IMPEDED.

5. WASHINGTON GUIDANCE URGENTLY REQUESTED AS PROJECT STOPPED.
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